

WEEKLY BULLETIN

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

ESTABLISHED APRIL 15, 1870
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MAY 21 1942

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ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER FEB. 21, 1922, AT THE POST OFFICE AT SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, UNDER THE ACT OF AUG. 24, 1912. ACCEPTANCE FOR MAILING AT THE SPECIAL RATE OF POSTAGE PROVIDED FOR IN SECTION 1103, ACT OF OCT. 3, 1917

SACRAMENTO, STATE OFFICE BLDG., 10TH AND L STS., 2-4711

SAN FRANCISCO, 603 PHELAN BLDG., 760 MARKET ST., UN 8700

LOS ANGELES, STATE OFFICE BLDG., 217 W. FIRST ST., MA 1271

VOL. XXI, No. 16

MAY 9, 1942

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FOOD WILL WIN THE WAR

All over the land the slogan "Food Will Win the War," is encountered. There is an element of truth in the slogan, but the food must be good food, properly selected, properly prepared and properly consumed. There are a great many "ifs" behind this slogan, as there are behind most of the slogans and catch phrases that are so popular among Americans.

Some consideration should be given to the public health organizations that are exercising close vigilance over food supplies, in order that they may be maintained at high levels without the use of substitutes or inferior products. Furthermore, attention is directed toward the danger in the home canning of meat and vegetables which is now encouraged, without adequate warnings relative to the hazards of botulism that lurk in such home-canned products. As already established in a warning issued in the columns of this publication, all home-canned vegetables and meat products must be boiled for at least 15 minutes before serving, if the hazard of botulism is to be eliminated. After years of scientific research, the commercial packing of vegetable and meat products has been made 100 per cent safe. The exact temperatures and time for cooking each and every vegetable product has been definitely worked out. Commercially canned products from California packing houses are 100 per cent safe for human consumption. Under no circumstances, however, can the same be said for home-canned vegetable products, for the simple reason that the average housewife is unable to provide sufficiently high temperatures for sufficient periods of time to destroy

in every instance the bacillus botulinus that is the cause of this highly fatal disease.

In actual lifesaving, under present conditions, it is probable that no single factor is of greater importance than the simple procedure of boiling for 15 minutes all home-canned meat and vegetable products before serving. Too much emphasis can not be placed upon this essential procedure. Housewives who have pressure cookers available may be able to can products in the home with the utmost safety. Such cookers are not readily available at the present time, however, because of the diversion of aluminum into war products. Housewives who own pressure cookers may obtain available information upon their use in home canning from the Bureau of Home Economics, College of Agriculture, University of California at Berkeley.

While housewives can exercise a certain control over food products that may be processed in the home, they must rely upon governmental organizations for protection against adulterated and mislabeled food products. The Bureau of Food and Drug Inspections of the California State Health Department is active in preventing the pernicious use of preservatives in ground meat such as hamburger and bulk pork sausage. The bureau is active in both northern and southern California. In San Bernardino, a wholesaler who was using sodium benzoate to preserve hamburger and bulk pork sausage was recently brought to bay. It was found that 580 pounds of hamburger with the addition of sodium benzoate had been prepared by him. Because of the need for conservation of food products, a voluntary condemnation order was obtained and

the lot was donated to charitable organizations. An Oriental meat dealer in Contra Costa County was fined \$50 for adding adulterants to chopped meat.

Dehydrated Vegetables

The looming shortage in some vegetable products has led to the rapid development of projects for the dehydration of vegetable stocks now on hand. It has been determined that raw materials removed from cold storage plants have been brought to dehydration plants without proper checking and sorting. In some cases partly decomposed onions and other vegetables have been dehydrated. The increase of price in the raw material has been no inconsiderable factor in the promotion of dehydration of such products. Formerly, onions were heretofore dehydrated in season when the prices were relatively low, and clean, wholesome raw materials were readily available.

A survey conducted by the Bureau of Food and Drug Inspections has indicated the need for greater surveillance to prevent the marketing of substandard dehydrated vegetable products. As an example of the alertness of the bureau, 48,500 pounds of onions have been placed under quarantine. Sorting of the product under bureau supervision resulted in the destruction of 4,215 pounds as unfit for human consumption and 8,285 pounds were released for sale. The remaining 36,000 pounds remain in quarantined pending supervised sorting.

Salvaged Products

At all times there are considerable quantities of salvaged food products for sale in California. These are made available through fires, floods, marine disasters and other catastrophies. Containers that have been subjected to heat, smoke and water or have been seriously dented must first be segregated from merchandise that has not been thus affected. Careful inspection in order to determine the presence of pin holes, destruction of vacuum and leakage must be undertaken. Under proper supervision, large amounts of wholesome food products can be saved. If canned goods are punctured, they are absolutely unfit for human consumption, as spoilage follows rapidly.

In San Francisco and Los Angeles, recently, large stocks of cereals, sugar, flour, canned goods and other food products have been carefully inspected under supervision of the Bureau of Food and Drug Inspections, resulting in the condemnation of large quantities of unfit material and the salvaging of considerable amounts that were found fit for human consumption.

Alimentary Paste

A certain brand of egg noodles manufactured in another State and distributed in southern California was found to be in packages that were only 60 per cent full. The product was packaged in such a manner as to lead the purchaser to believe the contents were actually more than appearances would indicate. As a result of the hearing on the deceptive packaging, the supply on hand was donated to charitable organizations in southern California. This supply amounted to 372 cases each of which contained 27-7 oz. packages.

Olive Oil

The scarcity of olive oil makes necessary the continued inspection of all olive oil products for human consumption. The San Francisco Bay Area, particularly Stockton, Vallejo and San Jose, seems to be headquarters for fraud and artifice in this traffic. Peddlers seem to be the chief offenders and there is considerable difficulty encountered in apprehending them. Nevertheless, four violations, two in Los Gatos and two in Oakland, were discovered.

Permission was given to a large firm to reblend 853 gallons of imitation olive oil which was originally offered as olive oil. The product will be blended with other vegetable oils and labeled in accordance with the provisions of the law. Four hundred sixteen gallons of mislabeled olive oil packed in Chicago and held under quarantine at a railroad depot in California was released for seizure by the United States Food and Drug Administration. Five hundred gallons of imitation olive oil, involved in the prosecution of the proprietors of a market were recently released after the material had been relabeled so as to comply with the provisions of the law.

Surplus Commodities

In cooperation with the State Department of Social Welfare, surplus food intended for distribution in the preparation of school lunches, was inspected to insure the provision of only wholesome products. Carloads of foodstuffs, including grapefruit, graham flour, butter, pinto beans, peanut butter, skinned hams and dried prunes were examined and found to be in edible condition.

Condensed Milk

Approximately 5,000 cans of condensed milk were quarantined as substandard because of low butter fat content. The material is said to have been originally packed for export, but present market conditions induced the owners to attempt quick disposal in California.

Miscellaneous

Among other food products held in quarantine in California during March were 1,500 gallons and 39 cases of Worcestershire sauce adulterated with saccharin. The material was voluntarily destroyed by the owner, who agreed to refrain from the use of the chemical at all future times.

Surveys of the beverage industry have been undertaken throughout the State in order to determine whether or not saccharin has been used in soft drinks.

Tomato products held under quarantine have been resampled in order to determine whether or not any contained large amounts of mold. Out of 32 lots comprising 90,000 cases, many were released as passable following a laboratory analysis. Two hundred gallons of tomato concentrate was found in a state of fermentation and destroyed. The balance of the lot, consisting of 1,120 gallons, suspected of high mold count was quarantined pending laboratory examination.

The repacking of olives, stuffed egg plant and other vegetables from large original containers to small packages without exercising proper precautions is a source of considerable concern. Official samples of such products have been obtained for bacteriological examination and the packer was ordered to discontinue the practice which may be potentially dangerous to the public health.

Bakeries

Wholesale bakeries in metropolitan areas are under active supervision of the Bureau of Food and Drug Inspections. Although minor violations are found at practically all such establishments, the general conditions encountered are satisfactory. Most of the minor violations which were ordered to be corrected immediately include lack of stringent rodent control, unpainted or scaling painted surfaces, insufficient locker space, inadequate flooring and the use of mislabeled products.

One bakery was found to be in a deplorable state of sanitation. The floors, walls and ceilings were in an extremely dirty condition, showing a long accumulation of deleterious materials. Cockroaches and spiders were found on the walls directly above the mixer and dead insects were found in some of the food products used in the manufacture of pastries. The conditions were so extreme that the facts were presented to the district attorney's office for prosecution. Agreement by the corporation to the immediate removal of all objectionable features and to maintain the premises in a sanitary manner henceforth, averted immediate prosecution.

These represent some of the activities that are being undertaken by the California State Department of Public Health in an effort to maintain food products at high standards. It is recognized that food in wartime is an important factor in the maintenance of health. Unless all food products are kept under high standards of sanitation and unless they contain sufficient food values to warrant the prices asked for them, they are of no value in winning the war. Aside from any objectives in the maintenance of nutrition that may be maintained by individuals, it goes without saying that the products that are used in the maintenance of nutrition must possess adequate standards and food values if individual health is to be maintained.

MONTEREY HAS NEW HEALTH OFFICER

Dr. Kenneth Sheriff has been appointed Health Officer of Monterey County succeeding Dr. Dwight M. Bissell, who resigned at the end of last year to become City Health Officer of San Jose. During the interim, Dr. John C. Sharp has acted as Health Officer of the County.

Dr. Sheriff, who has been Venereal Disease Officer in Monterey County, has had considerable experience in public health administration, and enters into his new duties with all of the problems that are associated with the maintenance of public health in an area that contains large numbers of military objectives.

FIBER GLASS NUISANCE IN SHIPYARD

On the request of a union shop steward and the safety engineer of a shipbuilding plant, an investigation by the Industrial Hygiene Services was made to determine whether the health of employees exposed to the dust and particles of fiber glass during the installation of this material was endangered. It was concluded that although some employees occasionally experience a mild skin irritation from this material, the handling of fiber glass apparently does not involve a health hazard. However, the dust may constitute a nuisance, and measures therefore were recommended to abate the nuisance characteristics of this product and to prevent any possible occurrence of skin irritation.

We owe it to ourselves to try to understand what is going on in the world and to prepare to carry on into the future the greatest values which the human race has found.—Dr. Ada L. Comstock.

MORBIDITY*

Complete Reports for Certain Diseases Recorded for Week Ending May 2, 1942

Chickenpox

1511 cases from the following counties: Alameda 247, Butte 1, Contra Costa 11, Fresno 24, Imperial 15, Kern 65, Kings 10, Los Angeles 515, Madera 3, Marin 1, Merced 10, Monterey 2, Napa 5, Nevada 1, Orange 49, Placer 4, Riverside 19, Sacramento 56, San Bernardino 38, San Diego 179, San Francisco 66, San Joaquin 15, San Mateo 10, Santa Barbara 26, Santa Clara 70, Siskiyou 1, Solano 1, Tulare 44, Ventura 22, Yolo 1.

German Measles

2412 cases from the following counties: Alameda 506, Butte 4, Contra Costa 19, Fresno 33, Imperial 2, Inyo 1, Kern 55, Kings 58, Los Angeles 248, Madera 1, Marin 4, Monterey 16, Nevada 108, Orange 16, Placer 2, Plumas 3, Riverside 121, Sacramento 14, San Benito 2, San Bernardino 45, San Diego 287, San Francisco 458, San Joaquin 186, San Luis Obispo 8, San Mateo 37, Santa Barbara 27, Santa Clara 47, Santa Cruz 2, Solano 6, Tulare 80, Ventura 5, Yolo 8, Yuba 3.

Measles

7191 cases from the following counties: Alameda 682, Amador 10, Butte 10, Colusa 5, Contra Costa 131, El Dorado 2, Fresno 201, Imperial 69, Inyo 4, Kern 155, Kings 126, Los Angeles 2766, Madera 53, Marin 14, Mariposa 16, Merced 47, Monterey 14, Napa 19, Orange 541, Placer 9, Plumas 6, Riverside 34, Sacramento 159, San Benito 1, San Bernardino 102, San Diego 861, San Francisco 356, San Joaquin 101, San Luis Obispo 30, San Mateo 74, Santa Barbara 94, Santa Clara 123, Santa Cruz 7, Shasta 7, Siskiyou 6, Solano 26, Stanislaus 8, Sutter 7, Tehama 22, Trinity 2, Tulare 173, Tuolumne 12, Ventura 89, Yolo 11, Yuba 6.

Mumps

2156 cases from the following counties: Alameda 255, Butte 14, Calaveras 2, Contra Costa 43, Del Norte 6, Fresno 73, Imperial 66, Kern 46, Kings 19, Los Angeles 371, Madera 6, Marin 4, Monterey 48, Nevada 8, Orange 87, Placer 19, Riverside 17, Sacramento 32, San Bernardino 49, San Diego 286, San Francisco 119, San Joaquin 144, San Luis Obispo 4, San Mateo 29, Santa Barbara 22, Santa Clara 84, Santa Cruz 8, Siskiyou 1, Solano 11, Stanislaus 4, Sutter 4, Tehama 50, Tulare 102, Tuolumne 2, Ventura 63, Yolo 3, Yuba 4.

Scarlet Fever

97 cases from the following counties: Alameda 6, Contra Costa 1, Fresno 7, Kern 2, Kings 2, Los Angeles 28, Marin 1, Merced 2, Monterey 4, Orange 2, Riverside 7, San Bernardino 3, San Diego 10, San Francisco 7, San Joaquin 5, San Luis Obispo 2, Santa Barbara 1, Solano 2, Tulare 4, California 1.**

Whooping Cough

426 cases from the following counties: Alameda 42, Amador 2, Fresno 21, Imperial 3, Kern 18, Kings 38, Los Angeles 83, Madera 5, Marin 1, Mendocino 3, Monterey 1, Nevada 6, Orange 32, Plumas 2, Sacramento 43, San Bernardino 6, San Diego 20, San Francisco 14, San Joaquin 48, San Luis Obispo 2, Santa Barbara 10, Santa Clara 11, Tulare 7, Ventura 5, Yolo 3.

Coccidioidal Granuloma

3 cases from the following counties: Kern 2, Los Angeles 1.

Diphtheria

6 cases from the following counties: Alameda 2, Los Angeles 2, Riverside 1, San Diego 1.

Dysentery (Bacillary)

One case from Los Angeles County.

Encephalitis (Epidemic)

One case from San Francisco.

Epilepsy

40 cases from the following counties: Fresno 1, Kern 1, Los Angeles 32, San Francisco 5, San Joaquin 1.

Food Poisoning

One case from Los Angeles County.

Influenza

93 cases reported in the State.

Jaundice (Epidemic)

26 cases from the following counties: Kings 21, Los Angeles 5.

* Data regarding the other reportable diseases not listed herein, may be obtained upon request.

** Cases charged to "California" represent patients ill before entering the State or those who contracted their illness traveling about the State throughout the incubation period of the disease. These cases are not chargeable to any one locality.

Leprosy

One case: California 1.**

Malaria

One case from Riverside County.

Meningitis (Epidemic)

2 cases from the following counties: Alameda 1, San Francisco 1.

Poliomyelitis

One case from Los Angeles.

Rabies (Animal)

16 cases from the following counties: Fresno 1, Los Angeles 3, San Diego 11, Solano 1.

Rheumatic Fever

3 cases from Los Angeles County.

Septic Sore Throat

One case from Lake County.

Tetanus

2 cases from the following counties: Los Angeles 1, Riverside 1.

Typhoid Fever

3 cases from the following counties: Fresno 1, Sacramento 1, San Francisco 1.

Undulant Fever

7 cases from the following counties: Colusa 1, Los Angeles 4, San Luis Obispo 2.

TYPHOID, LOWEST IN HISTORY

During 1941, 233 cases of typhoid fever were reported in California. This represents the lowest incidence on record. Eight cases were traced by epidemiological and laboratory investigations to drinking water taken from contaminated creeks, wells and ditches. Thirty cases were diagnosed in California, but the patients were either ill when they arrived here from other States or countries or were taken ill within four days after their arrival. Ten of these 30 cases came from one camp in Nevada.

Twenty cases were traced to 17 proven carriers—16 carriers were responsible for 16 cases, and one for four cases.

A total of 33 typhoid carriers was registered during the year. They are classified as follows:

Transfers from other States.....	5
Cases in 1940 convalescent carriers.....	3
Food handlers examination.....	3
Patients hospitalized for other causes.....	3
Sources of cases diagnosed in 1940.....	2
Sources of cases diagnosed in 1941.....	17
Total	33

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